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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR WOLFF MEETS WITH HONDURAN PR REINA

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff, Deputy Permanent Representative, for Reasons 4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. In a meeting with Ambassador Wolff, August 17, Honduran PermRep Reina Idiaquez said the OAS must set a firm, September 1 deadline to reinstate Zelaya and ensure a legitimate election process, otherwise the GOH would request UN Security Council involvement. Reina said the U.S. sent a very good signal to the interim regime by recently denying visas for electoral commission members. He noted the defacto government froze the mission's assets but that there were sufficient funds to cover staff salaries through the end of the month. Ambassador Wolff told Reina that recent comments, including those of Deputy Foreign Minister Valle, were baseless, tendentious and damage the Zelaya camp. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Ambassador Wolff met with Honduran PermRep Reina Idiaquez, August 17, at the latter's request. Reina said that President Zelaya had asked him to convey to USUN the importance of the OAS setting a firm deadline following the OAS Foreign Ministers' mission, that would have to end before September 1, the beginning of the electoral process in Honduras. Any such process without Zelaya's re-installation, Reina continued, would be illegitimate. Ambassador Wolff inquired how the GOH expected to incentivize meeting the deadline and what consequences did the GOH envision should the deadline not be met? Reina responded that the GOH would request that the UN Security Council take up the matter. Reina reiterated Zelaya's view that the electoral process cannot start without the restitution of the legitimate government.

¶3. (C) Reina also raised the recent denial of visa applications for members of the electoral commission who had requested to travel to the U.S. to take the soundings of Honduran communities in the U.S. (which he described as a routine matter during previous election cycles). Reina noted that these decisions were causing a lot of questions among the de facto authorities and underscored that it was a very good signal from the U.S. that the election process would not be business as usual given the current circumstances in the country.

¶4. (C) Reina also indicated that his mission and staff were struggling financially as the de facto government had frozen payment and financial support, including apartment leases in the government's name. He said that they had sufficient funds to stretch out staff salaries until the end of the month. (Note: the Hondurans were able to tap into payment overages made previously to the UN peacekeeping account (\$150,000) and we understand can access another \$75,000 if necessary. End Note)

¶5. (C) Ambassador Wolff took the opportunity to lay down another marker regarding U.S. concern about ongoing Chavez

involvement, his unhelpful comments, and the most recent statement by deputy Foreign Minister Patricia Valle alleging U.S. involvement in the coup. Wolff said these were without basis and not helpful, and he underscored how they negatively affect the Zelaya camp. Reina said he understood and would make the point with Zelaya.

¶6. (C) Comment: USUN notes that the deadline described by Reina coincides with the start of the U.S. presidency of the Security Council. We should not rule out that the approach laid out by Reina may be a coordinated political effort by the Zelaya camp (or some of their backers) to ensure this issue is dealt with by the Security Council during our presidency. Zelaya's camp will also have to decide how it will be represented at the UNGA General Debate in the latter part of September, which will be an important international platform.

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